The Builder.

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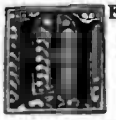

ESSRS. J. B. Waring and T. R. Macquoid have just now issued a volume entitled, "Examples of Architectural Art in Italy and Spain, chiefly of the 13th and 16th Centuries,"* which eminently deserves the support of the profession. It is a large volume, "Columbier folio;" consists of 64 plates, in lithography, partly elevations and details in outline very clearly drawn, and partly picturesque views of structures; and is dedicated to the President, Council, and Fellows of the Institute of British Architects. It is not merely a pretty work, and a pleasant work to turn over, but a practically useful work, presenting a mass of data, models to work upon, and materials for re-combination. It is to be regretted that the volume contains no letter-press. The only descriptive matter given is on a loose sheet of four pages, called a prospectus; an arrangement, we venture to guess, made to escape the unjust tax imposed on authors by the requirement of a certain number of copies for public collections,—a tax which, of course, presses peculiarly hard on the producers of costly illustrated works; every copy of which entails a large expenditure on the author. It is most desirable that there should be public collections, where every work issued should be found; but it is manifestly unjust that the cost of supplying these should fall wholly on the producers, who ought to be aided instead of oppressed. It is quite time that this unjust and injurious law should be abrogated.

The plates in Messrs. Waring and Macquoid's work follow under the heads Romanesque, Florentine, Cinque-Cento, Italian, and Spanish Renaissance. They say, in their prospectus, that "they cannot help looking on the Cinque-Cento, Renaissance, Elizabethan, Norman, and Romanesque" (there is a little confusion here), "as various stages of development of one style, suited to peculiar subjects, influenced by the requirements of the times when they arose, and containing a generic similitude." With respect to the possible invention of a new style they say, "if such a reward does attend the activity and creative powers of the century, it seems pretty certain that the semicircular arch will be its constructive and characteristic feature; and a more noble foundation art never rested on: perfect in its form, calm, powerful, continuous, it is certainly suited to give grandeur to any system which may be raised on it. However this may be, considering the constant use of the arch at the present day, its ornamentation has been strangely neglected, and we have therefore sought for the best examples of its ornamental construction in Romanesque and Cinque-Cento, where it forms an important feature."

Many of these examples from Pisa, Lucca, &c. are very interesting and suggestive. The cloisters at Moureale contain some good sculpture, and afford them subjects. The porch of Lucca Cathedral shows the importance of providing for light and shade in designs. Without arrangements to obtain these, the finest work is thrown away,—with them, the roughest work may be overlooked. The Town Hall of Piacenza deserves notice on account of its curious terra-cotta windows. The view given is not so good a drawing as some of them; and we may observe generally that the picturesque views, although very effective, are somewhat coarsely executed.

Amongst the examples of Florentine palaces are measured elevations of the Palazzo Ricardi and Palazzo Strozzi. Iron and bronze works from the same neighbourhood are not forgotten. The mouldings of the Florentine buildings are peculiar and deserve study.

Amongst the Cinque-Cento buildings is the Palazzo Manzoni, Venice, with much elegance and many defects. There are views of the Giant's Staircase at the Ducal Palace, Venice, (good), and the Palazzo Vendramin. Of Venetian details there is a good collection.

The marble lavatory in the Certosa, at Pavia (*circa* 1490) is for the most part nicely drawn. It is of plain white marble, with serpentine inlay, and is a miracle of delicate workmanship. The relief here, as well as other of the monuments shown, is very low, and requires a stronger light than we usually have in England. The cloisters of the Certosa furnish some elaborately sculptured architraves.

For drawing part of St. Mark's Library, Venice (type of the Carlton Club), they had the advantage of a scaffolding: the cornice is given to a large scale.

We pass on to what will be considered by many the most novel and interesting part of the work—the illustrations of Spanish Renaissance,—the Town Hall, Seville; the Hospital de la Cruz, Toledo (1514); Casa Miranda, Burgos; Collegio de las Virgenes, Zaragoza; the Town Hall of Zaragoza; the Caza Zaporta, of same city, and others.

We should mention that "of the Spanish Renaissance, or Plataresco, as it is termed, exuberance of ornament, and variety of design, are the chief characteristics. It possesses more merit in its sculpture than in its architecture, and holds a place between the Renaissance of France and the Elizabethan of England. The arabesques are remarkable for their invention and grotesqueness, the preponderating use of figures, human and inhuman, birds, dragons, beasts, and nondescripts, all excellently worked out. Fancy supersedes beauty, and often with effect; distorted pediments, an immense quantity of sculpture, bed-post columns, and a great admixture of Gothic models, are its usual and worst features, forming a whole which, however it may please the eye and the imagination, is straggling, rough, unrefined, and offensive to an educated sense of beauty; it lacks the grace and compactness of Italian *cinque cento*; and contesting with Gothic and Moorish in its richness and effects, falls far short of both in artistic merit. It is, however, not the less valuable on this account for its suggestive qualities, and well adapted for interiors, where the fancy is allowed a wider scope in the use of ornament." Of the buildings which preceded this style in Spain there are still many fine remains. Moorish architecture will be found in Seville, Granada, and Cordova, and Gothic buildings will be found throughout the country. We think that our authors, in the above remarks, are scarcely just to the Renaissance of Spain. "This style," says Mr. Ford, in his admirable "Handbook for Travellers in Spain,"* "was exalted to its highest grade by a glorious host of Spanish artists, who rivalled in marble and metal the Bramantes and Cellinis of Italy; from its delicate details, wrought like a finely chiselled piece of plate, this style is called in Spain *el Plateresco*, and also *de Berruguete*, from the name of the great architect, sculptor, and painter, who carried it out to its full perfection, and whose exquisite works are deserving of the closest study."

Under Philip II. the Plateresque architecture declined, and the more strictly classical was introduced, generally known in Spain as that of *Herrera*, from being adopted by Juan de Herrera, who completed the Escorial in 1564, a building "extremely magnifical, of fame and glory throughout all countries."

It will be useful to know some of the leading terms as regards the cathedrals of Spain; and we glean the following from Mr. Ford's book, already mentioned:—The exteriors are often surrounded with a platform or *lonja*, which, if ascended by steps, is called a *gradus*, "grees:" the principal front is frequently left unfinished,—first, in order to disarm the evil eye; and next, to serve as a constant pretext for begging contributions for its completion. The western entrance commonly presents the chief facade, and is called *fachada principal*: the naves, *naves*, are supported by piers, *pilones*, from whence springs the roof, *boveda*. The side aisles, *alas*, wings, are called *laterales*, *colaterales*; at the entrance is a small *pila*, stoup, or benitier, which contains the *agua bendita*, or holy water, with which every Spaniard crosses him or herself on entrance, *santiguarse*. The quire, *coro*, is ordinarily placed in the centre nave, thus blocking it up and concealing the high altar: its back, which fronts the spectator who enters from the west, is called *el trascoro*; the lateral sides, *los respaldos del coro*, and over these the organs are usually placed. The quire is lined with stalls, *sillas*; the seats, *silleria del coro*, are generally carved, and often most beautifully, as are the desks of the quirister's books, *los atriles*, and the lecterns or *facistoles*.

Opposite to the *coro* is an open space, which marks the centre of the transept, *crucero*, and over which is the great dome, *el cimborio*. This space is called the "*entre los dos coros*," and divides the quire from the high altar. This, again, is usually isolated and fenced off by a *reja*, "purclose," or railing, the *cancelli*, gratings, whence comes our term chancel. These *rejas* are among the most remarkable and artistical peculiarities of Spain, and, from being made of iron, have escaped the melting-pot. The pulpits, *pulpitos*, *ambones*, generally two in number, are placed in the angle outside the chancel: they are fixed N.W. and S.W., in order that the preacher may face the congregation, who look towards the high altar, without his turning his back to it. Ascending usually by steps is the *capilla mayor*, *el presbiterio*, where is the high altar, *el altar mayor*, on which is placed a tabernacle, *el tabernaculo*, or *ciborio*, under which the consecrated wafer is placed in a *viril*, or open "monstrance," when displayed, or *manifestado*.

At the back of the high altar rises a screen, or *reredos*, called *el retablo*: these often are most magnificent, reared high aloft, and crowned with a "holy rood," *la Santa Cruz*, which is the representation of Christ on the Cross, with St. John and the Virgin at his side. The *retablos* are most elaborately designed, carved, painted, and gilt *estofado*. They are divided into compartments, either by niches

* Published by Thomas M'Lean, London, 1850.

* London, John Murray, Albemarle-street.

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